

Message Text

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ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 /026 W
-----106007 231739Z /41

O P 231720Z MAR 78
FM AMEMBASSY LONDON
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 4512
AMEMBASSY DAR ES SALAAM IMMEDIATE
INFO AMEMBASSY PRETORIA PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY LUSAKA PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY MAPUTO PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY GABORONE PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY LILONGWE PRIORITY
AMCONSUL CAPE TOWN PRIORITY
USMISSION USUN NEW YORK PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 LONDON 04734

EXDIS

CAPE TOWN FOR EMBASSY

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PDEV UK RH
SUBJECT: RHODESIA: RAMPHAL LETTER TO FRONT LINE
PRESIDENTS

1. COMMONWEALTH SECRETARY GENERAL SONNY RAMPHAL HAS
SENT THE FOLLOWING LETTER TO PRESIDENTS NYERERE, KHAMA
AND KAUNDA WITH AN INFORMATION COPY TO OBASANJO.
RAMPHAL IS ANXIOUS THAT IT BE BROUGHT TO THE ATTENTION
OF AMBASSADOR YOUNG BEFORE THE FRONT LINE PRESIDENT'S
MEETING THIS WEEKEND.

2. BEGIN TEXT: MY DEAR PRESIDENT:

EVENTS OF RECENT WEEKS HAVE LEFT ME DEEPLY TROUBLED
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OVER THE IMMEDIATE FUTURE IN ZIMBABWE AND SOUTHERN
AFRICA GENERALLY. SEPARATE CONVERSATIONS WITH MUZOREWA
AND NKOMO AND MY ASSESSMENT OF THE MOOD THAT IS DEVELOP-
ING IN BRITAIN HAVE HEIGHTENED THESE CONCERNS WHICH I
FEEL I MUST SHARE WITH YOU.

MY GREATEST FEAR IS FOR A STATE OF DRIFT IN THE

NEGOTIATING PROCESSES DIRECTED TOWARDS ACHIEVING REAL INDEPENDENCE AND THE INCENTIVES FOR AN INTENSIFICATION AND INTERNATIONALISATION OF THE ARMED STRUGGLE WHICH PSEUDO-SETTLEMENT DEVELOPMENTS IN SALISBURY ARE ALMOST CERTAIN TO PROVIDE.

THE ANSWER MUST SURELY LIE IN THE ASSIDUOUS PURSUIT OF THE OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED BY THE ANGLO-AMERICAN PROPOSALS - INCLUDING THE DEVELOPMENT OF A UNITED NATIONS ROLE AS FORESHADOWED BY THE SECURITY COUNCIL'S AUTHORISATION OF PREM CHAND'S APPOINTMENT. THE DIFFICULTY IS THAT THERE ARE NOW APPARENT CONSTRAINTS ON THE PART OF ALL THE PRINCIPALS IN ACTIVATING THE PROPOSALS: SMITH, BECAUSE OF THEIR IMPLICATIONS FOR GENUINE MAJORITY RULE; MUZOREWA AND SITHOLE, BECAUSE OF THEIR INVESTMENT IN THE SALISBURY ARRANGEMENT; THE PATRIOTIC FRONT, BECAUSE OF THEIR ANTI-PATHY TO SOME OF THE IMPORTANT FEATURES OF THE PROPOSALS; AND NOW, BRITAIN, CLEARLY NOT FINDING IT EASY TO BREAK THROUGH THESE NEGATIVE RESONANCES AND FEARFUL OF FURTHER FRUSTRATIONS.

OTHERS, THEREFORE, MUST INDUCE THE RETURN TO ACTIVISM. THE FIRST TASK - AND THERE IS NEED TO ACCOMPLISH IT QUICKLY - IS SECURING AGREEMENT FOR THE RESUMPTION OF THE DISCUSSIONS ADJOURNED IN MALTA. BRITAIN SHOWS NO ENTHUSIASM FOR THIS AND THE PATRIOTIC CONFIDENTIAL

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FRONT, WHO ARE NOW MORE WILLING, STILL SEEM TO SEE IT IN TACTICAL RATHER THAN STRATEGIC TERMS. MY FEELING IS THAT IF WE CAN CREATE CONFIDENCE IN THE SUCCESSFUL OUT-COME OF A RESUMED MALTA BY BRINGING ABOUT BEFOREHAND SUBSTANTIVE AGREEMENT IN RESPECT OF THE ARRANGEMENTS FOR A POSSIBLE CEASE-FIRE AND SECURITY ARRANGEMENTS DURING THE TRANSITION, INCLUDING FOR EXAMPLE THE ROLE OF THE UNITED NATIONS FORCE THROUGHOUT THE TRANSITIONAL PERIOD (AND NOT JUST AS OBSERVERS OF THE ELECTIONS), BRITISH RELUCTANCE MIGHT YET BE OVERCOME.

ANOTHER PRE-REQUISITE ALMOST CERTAINLY IS UNDERSTANDING THAT A RESUMED MALTA WILL LEAD TO A LARGER CONFERENCE INVOLVING ALL THE PARTIES CONCERNED. TO ALLOW THE SALISBURY ARRANGEMENT TO IMPEDE SUCH A LARGER MEETING - WHICH WAS ALWAYS ENVISAGED - IS THE VERY OPPOSITE OF NON-RECOGNITION. BY THE SAME TOKEN, IT WOULD BE IMPRACTICABLE AND PERHAPS COUNTER-PRODUCTIVE TO TRY TO PRECLUDE THE PARTIES TO THE SALISBURY AGREEMENT FROM REFERRING TO IT AT THE MEETING - ANY MORE THAN TO PRECLUDE SMITH FROM REFERRING TO OTHER ILLEGALITIES SUCH AS THE WHOLE APPARATUS OF THE UDI GOVERNMENT. THE

ESSENTIAL FRAMEWORK OF THE LARGER CONFERENCE MUST BE THE

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 02 OF 02 LONDON 04734

EXDIS

ANGLO-AMERICAN PROPOSALS - BUT, THEY WERE ALWAYS A BASIS
FOR NEGOTIATION.

IF BROAD UNDERSTANDINGS CAN BE REACHED ON THESE
LINES AND IF THE FRONT-LINE PRESIDENTS CAN URGE IT - I
STILL BELIEVE THAT IT MAY BE POSSIBLE TO HAVE A RESUMED
MALTA LEADING, PREFERABLY QUICKLY, TO AN ENLARGED
CONFERENCE.

HOW CAN WE GET THERE? PRESIDENT CARTER'S VISIT TO
AFRICA IN A FEW WEEKS COULD SURELY BE MADE A CATALYST
FOR ACCORD ON THESE LINES. GENERAL OBASANJO, HIS HOST,
CAN PLAY A POSITIVE ROLE; BUT HE WILL NEED THE HELP OF
THE FRONT-LINE PRESIDENTS. I BELIEVE THAT THESE POSSI-
BILITIES ARE BEING EXPLORED; I HOPE YOU CAN FACILITATE
THEM. IF OUT OF THAT VISIT CAN COME UNDERSTANDINGS
BETWEEN PRESIDENT CARTER AND AFRICAN PRESIDENTS TO WORK
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FOR SUCH DEVELOPMENTS, IT MAY BE POSSIBLE, EVEN NOW, TO
AVOID DISASTER.

I AM ADDRESSING THIS NOTE TO THE OTHER COMMONWEALTH
FRONT-LINE PRESIDENTS AND TO GENERAL OBASANJO. I AM
SPEAKING TO THE BRITISH AND AMERICAN GOVERNMENTS IN THE
HOPE OF ENCOURAGING THEM TO BE RECEPTIVE TO THESE IDEAS.
I NATURALLY REMAIN WILLING TO FURTHER THEM IN ALL
PRACTICABLE WAYS AND WOULD WELCOME YOUR THOUGHTS.
MOST SINCERELY, SHRIDATH S. RAMPHAL (END TEXT)

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